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30 January 1968

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*Vietnam:

South Vietnam: Communist forces launched a series of well-coordinated attacks on eight principal cities in South Vietnam's I and II Corps areas early on 30 January--the lunar new year's day.

The unprecedented wave of attacks included a heavy rocket bombardment of the key US base at Da Nang, and mortar and rocket shellings and ground assaults on seven provincial capitals in the western highlands and the coastal provinces as far south as Nha Trang. Sharp fighting was reported continuing early this morning in Da Nang, Nha Trang, and the cities of Pleiku and Kontum.

Enemy raids also occurred at Ban Me Thuot, Cam Ranh Bay, Tuy Hoa, Hoi An and Qui Nhon. The village of Tan Canh, some 20 miles northwest of Kontum, was overrun and burned.

There are no new reports of fighting immediately south of the Demilitarized Zone, but the current posture of North Vietnamese troops there and in other strategic areas of the country point to the possibility of imminent battles on several other fronts. Because of the situation, the South Vietnamese Government announced the cancellation of the allied Tet cease-fire period.

Preparations for the widespread attacks have been noted in recent days. The timing of this current Communist campaign--on Vietnam's most important holiday--was probably designed in part to achieve maximum psychological impact. Furthermore, the enemy demonstrated his ability to penetrate major populated areas with an extensive show of force.

The Communists apparently hope to shift the responsibility for these blantant violations of the truce periods to the allied side. Hanoi Radio, in a broadcast early this

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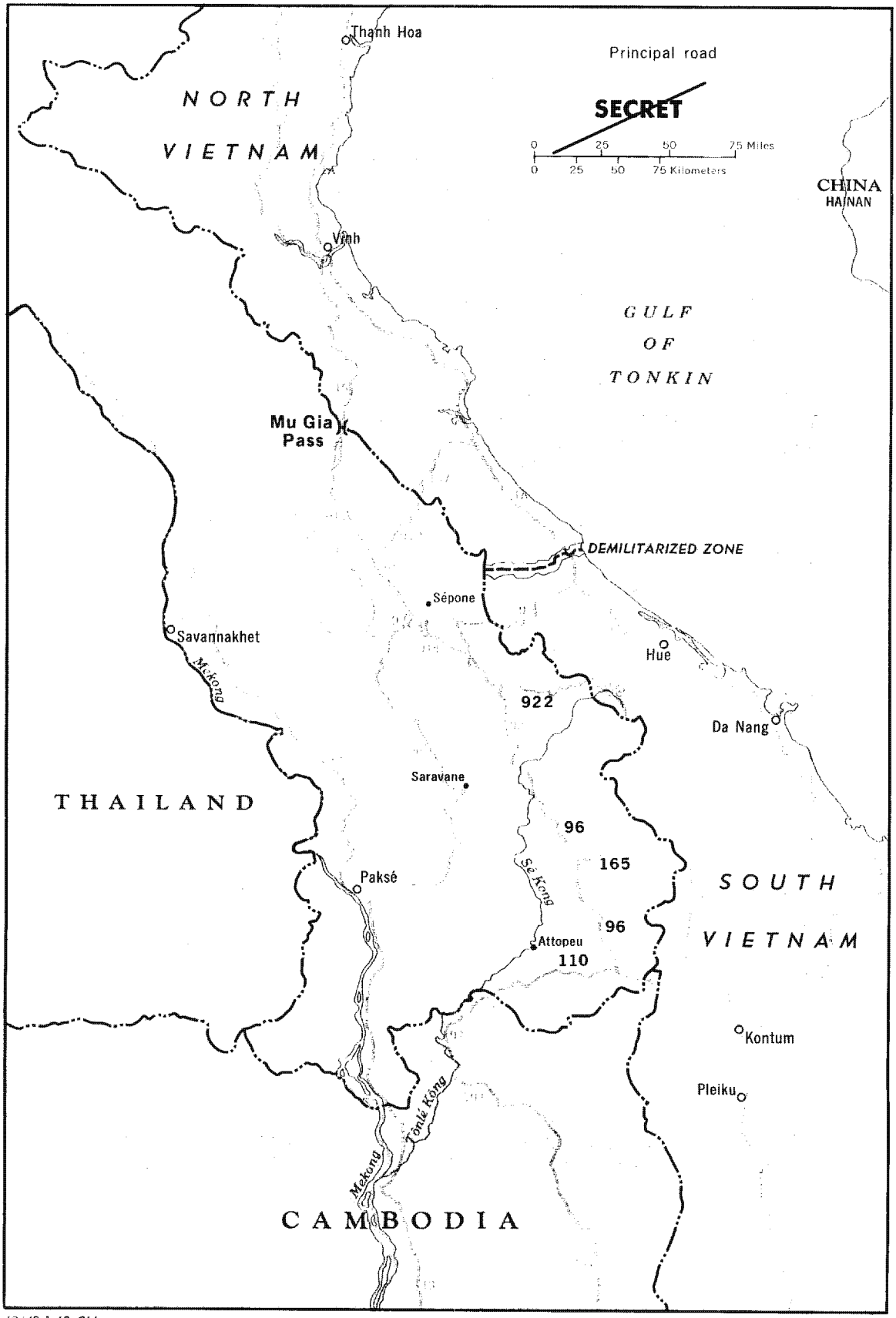

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morning, charged that the US and South Vietnam had canceled the cease-fire in northern South Vietnam and launched heavy attacks on the civilian population throughout the country. (Map)

Laos: Large numbers of North Vietnamese trucks are moving through the Mu Gia Pass into Laos, and there are indications of substantial activity on the road net farther south.

A daily average of 29 trucks was moved south through the Mu Gia Pass during the first 19 days of January. This is an increase over the 20-truck average for the corresponding period last year, although the over-all rate for this dry season so far is approximately the same as that for the 1966-67 dry season.

There have also been reliable reports of extensive truck traffic on Routes 96 and 110.

Farther south, Route 165 east of Chavane shows signs of heavy use to a point approximately three miles from the South Vietnamese border. Air strikes have exploded large caches of fuel and ammunition near Route 922, and recent photography shows large numbers of POL drums along this road. [redacted] 3.5(c)

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